

REMINISCENCES OF MRS. JOSEFA PAPEZ, ALBION, NEBRASKA.

I was born in 1848 in Techonice, Bohemia and left my native land in 1869. We stayed in Baltimore fifteen weeks, then went on to Omaha, where my brother, V. L. Vodicka, lived. We crossed the Missouri on a ferry over the Missouri River. Omaha was then a small town. Where the Bohemian settlement now is, in the vicinity of Thirteenth and William Street, was nothing but brushwood. On Fourteenth Street was but one decent house and several shanties, in which lived Bohemian immigrants, who did not tarry long but went on to find claims. My husband came to America in 1867. I married him in 1870 and February 12th, of that year we went to our homestead seven miles northwest of Schuyler, Nebraska. My husband's step-brother Jan Stibal and his cousin Henry Stibal, were with us. Both live in Richland, Nebraska, now. They all ^{took} adjoining claims. We had little money, as did everybody in those days. John built a little house on our land and it was agreed that when we will be in better circumstances, similar houses will be built on the other claims. In the spring my husband, who was by trade a tailor, received \$40.00 pay from a tailoring firm in Omaha, and we bought a cow. We owned a sewing machine and woollen goods, so we sewed for people and got in this way six chickens, several hogs and three yearling calves. We got a rooster from Mr. Vrchota. I raised 40 ^{chickens} chickens, so we had a good start that year. Our cousin worked on the rail road and for his salary we bought oxen. In the fall we borrowed an old wagon and the men hauled wood all winter from the creek. The next spring my husband had 13 acres plowed across the whole three eighties (in those days 80 acres were given as a homestead) and the first year we got 60 bushels of wheat and some corn, potatoes and vegetables. It all grew in the sod, so

it was hard work to hoe it. Then we bought a wagon and a subsoil plow and the work was much easier. The next year was dry and we got but 40 bushels of wheat. We sent a sack of flour of it to Chicago, where there was great want after the fire in 1871. I want to say that in 1870 the weather was very warm until February 17th., when suddenly the north wind came with snow. Our "residence" had no ceiling and was loosely put together. The blizzard raged for three days and we had three such storms that winter and spring. Had it not been for our featherbeds, we would have frozen. The bread was frozen stiff, we had to thaw it on the stove. Before we could make a well in the spring, we had to drink melted snow and standing water from the hollows. When the well was finished, the water tasted of resin and it took a long time before it was fit to drink. Those were some of the pleasant things of pioneer times, but we were young and full of courage for the future.

My husband stayed on the homestead two years and then worked at his trade. I had to stay on the claim two years ^{longer} before we could get a title. Then I followed my husband and together we sewed. In 1880 we moved to Albion, where my husband had a shop. In 1884 we moved to Omaha, but did not do well there, so we returned after a year and a half.